Quality in the VET system – a shared responsibility

**VET REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**
- The Australian Parliament
- Skills Ministers Skills Council
- Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC)
- Industry Reference Committees (IRCs)
- Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) Skills Pilot Organisations

**TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL WESTERN AUSTRALIA (TAC)**

**AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY (ASQA)**

**VICTORIAN REGISTRATION AND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (VRQA)**

**VET FUNDING, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**
- Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE)
- State & Territory Training Authorities (STAs)
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
- National Skills Commission

**VET PROVISION**
- RTO Peak Bodies
- RTo/Providers
- Third-Party Agencies
- Apprenticeship Network Providers

**STUDENTS & CONSUMER PROTECTION**
- Tuition Protection
- National Training Complaints Hotline
- Ombudsman
- Australian Consumer Law Regulators

**INDUSTRY & EMPLOYERS**
- Peak Business/Employer Groups
- State/Territory Industry Regulators
- National Industry Associations & Unions
- Industry Associations & Unions
Understanding the VET regulatory architecture

The Australian Parliament approves VET legislation that ASQA regulates against including the NVR Act and the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000.

National Cabinet (formerly COAG)

**VET REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

**VET QUALITY FRAMEWORK**

The VET Quality Framework:
- the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (Standards for RTOs)
- the Quality Standards
- the Australian Qualifications Framework
- the Fit and Proper Person Requirements
- the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
- the Data Provision Requirements.

Administered by the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business with agreement from the Ministerial Council.

Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) provides advice to the Ministerial Council on the implementation of VET policies. AISC quality assures and approves training packages for implementation.

**TRAINING PACKAGE DEVELOPMENT & APPROVAL**

Training Packages are sets of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications used to recognise and assess the skills and knowledge people need to perform effectively in the workplace.

Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) determine industry need and oversee training product development.

Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) provide support and related services to enable IRCs to develop and review training packages.

**VET REGULATORS**

**ASQA—THE NATIONAL VET REGULATOR**

ASQA regulates against the NVR Act, VET Quality Framework, VET legislation, Standards and Training package requirements.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) regulates RTOs that operate solely in Victoria and do not offer courses online or to overseas students.

The Training Accreditation Council (TAC) in Western Australia regulates RTOs that operate solely in WA and do not offer courses online or to overseas students.

**VET Research: the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)** is a national research, evaluation and information organisation for the VET sector in Australia, jointly established by state, territory and Commonwealth ministers responsible for skills. NCVER is the data custodian of the national VET statistical collections and national VET survey collections.

National Careers Institute: Created to improve the quality of career development and career information and services.

National Skills Commission: provides advice and data on workforce skills needs, VET pricing and investment in VET.
VET regulators (i.e. ASQA, VRQA & TAC) are not responsible for the functions of direct consumer protection. VET regulators cannot assist VET students to resolve disputes regarding fees or contract breaches by their training provider. ASQA’s role in consumer protection is to regulate the standards for RTOs which are heavily underpinned by consumer protection principles to ensure that learners are properly informed and protected.

Regulation of higher education is the responsibility of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TESQA). ASQA works with TEQSA to regulate providers that operate in both VET and higher education markets (i.e. multisector providers).

Department of Home Affairs regulates overseas students who come to Australia to study VET through the approval and regulation of student visas. The Department’s office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) regulates Australian migration agents. ASQA’s role in International education is to regulate the provision of training to these students.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) has the powers to set aside decisions made by ASQA. RTOs that contest reviewable decisions made by ASQA may apply for an internal review by ASQA. If a resolution cannot be achieved after the reconciliation is completed, an RTO can then apply to the AAT for external review of the final decision.
**Employers and industry** are integral to a quality VET system.

Employers may employ students while they undertake a VET course (sometimes through a traineeship or apprenticeship pathway) or employ VET graduates.

Group Training organisations (GTOs) provide a specific type of employment arrangement that is an option for the employment of apprentices and trainees. The GTO recruits and employs the apprentice or trainee and places them with a host employer.

Some employers have the dual role of both employer and RTO (e.g. enterprise RTOs deliver training primarily to their own employees).

Nationally recognised VET outcomes are offered in almost every industry in Australia. This diversity of industry and employers involved in the VET sector is represented by a range of bodies and associations.
**VET provision** is integral to quality outcomes.

RTOs and providers are responsible for systematically monitoring, evaluating and continuously improving their practice (including services offered on their behalf by a third party) to assure quality outcomes for students, industry and employers.

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**RTO peak bodies** represent the interests of RTOs in Australia. Private peak bodies are often membership-based e.g. ITECA, CCA, ALA, NEAS*, IHEA and English Australia*. The public sector is represented by TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) and enterprise RTOs are represented by the Enterprise RTO Association (ERTOA).

*RRepresenting providers that deliver training to overseas students

**RTOs/providers**

Being a registered training organisation (RTO) is a requirement to deliver nationally recognised training or a nationally accredited VET course.

*RTOs who offer VET courses to overseas students studying in Australia must also have CRICOS registration.

*ELICOS providers offer English Language Intensive Courses to overseas students.

RTOs operate in an open and competitive market. RTOs can be publicly established providers e.g. TAFE, a private for-profit RTO, a community-based not-for-profit RTO or an enterprise RTO (i.e. an employer and RTO that delivers training primarily to its own employees).

*Specific to overseas students

**Third-party agencies**

Third-party agencies must have a written agreement with RTOs in order to provide services related to nationally recognised training on behalf of an RTO. Those services might include recruitment or enrolment of prospective learners, provision of educational or support including services to overseas students, delivery of training and/or assessment, and issuance of qualifications.

**Apprenticeship network providers**

Apprenticeship network providers offer advice and support services tailored to the needs of employers, apprentices and trainees throughout the apprenticeship lifecycle from pre-commencement to completion.

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*Specific to overseas students
Students & consumer protection

Students are at the centre of quality outcomes in the VET sector. The Council of International Students Australia (CISA) is the national peak student representative organisation for overseas students studying VET, ELICOS or other higher education.

There is not one peak national body that represents the interests of all other VET students as VET students are such a diverse group.

There are a range of organisations that provide avenues for VET sector students to lodge concerns and/or provide consumer protection services for VET students.

STUDENTS & CONSUMER PROTECTION

TUITION PROTECTION

NATIONAL TRAINING COMPLAINTS HOTLINE

OMBUDSMAN

AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER LAW REGULATORS

DET NATIONAL TRAINING COMPLAINTS HOTLINE

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a joint Australian Government and state and territory governments’ initiative that provides a central contact number and referral service for anyone with complaints or queries about the training sector.

AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER LAW REGULATORS

Australia has state, territory and Australian Government consumer law regulators. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) regulates Commonwealth consumer law and considers student claims regarding breaches of contracts for VET services.

OMBUDSMAN

An ombudsman is a publicly-funded official who acts as an independent intermediary between individuals and governments. Two specialist Commonwealth ombudsmen roles exist with relevance to the VET sector: the VET Student Loans (VSL) Ombudsman and the Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO). State and territory Ombudsmen operate in their law-making jurisdictions.

TUITION PROTECTION

The Standards for RTOs 2015 (regulated by ASQA) set out requirements for RTOs with regards to pre-paid tuition fees. The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) administers tuition assurance arrangements for VET student loans as well as the Tuition Protection Service (TPS) to assist international students to complete their studies or receive a refund in cases where their provider is unable to fully deliver their course of study.
### List of Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AAT</td>
<td>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</td>
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<td>ACCC</td>
<td>Australian Competition and Consumer Commission</td>
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<td>ACCI</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<td>AiG</td>
<td>Australian Industry Group</td>
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<td>AISC</td>
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<td>ALA</td>
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<td>ASQA</td>
<td>Australian Skills Quality Authority</td>
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<td>BCA</td>
<td>Business Council of Australia</td>
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<td>Community Colleges Australia</td>
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<td>CISA</td>
<td>Council of International Students Australia</td>
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<td>CISC</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments Industry and Skills Council</td>
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<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
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<td>CRICOS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students</td>
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<td>DESE</td>
<td>Department of Education, Skill and Employment</td>
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<td>ELICOS</td>
<td>English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students</td>
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<td>ESOS</td>
<td>Education Services for Overseas Students</td>
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<td>ERTOA</td>
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<td>Independent Higher Education Australia</td>
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<td>MARA</td>
<td>Migration Agents Registration Authority</td>
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<td>National ELT Accreditation Scheme Limited</td>
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<td>NCVER</td>
<td>National Centre for Vocational Education Research</td>
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<td>OSO</td>
<td>Overseas Student Ombudsman</td>
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<td>RTO</td>
<td>Registered Training Organisation</td>
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<td>SSO</td>
<td>Skills Service Organisation</td>
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<td>STA</td>
<td>State Training Authority</td>
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<td>Training Accreditation Council (Western Australia)</td>
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<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<td>Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority</td>
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Disclaimer: This document provides a brief, introductory overview to assist in navigating the VET system. You should not rely solely on this document to understand the complexity of the roles and responsibilities of the organisations mentioned. Please contact the relevant agency to determine what conditions or eligibility requirements may apply to the services or programs mentioned. Information current as of November 2020.